

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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P R 271420Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5281
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USBERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 01613

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, OVIP, BQG, OAU, GW, UR, GB
SUBJECT: SOVIETS PROTEST BONGO VISIT TO BERLIN

REF: (A) LIBREVILLE 0020 (NOTAL), (B) BONN 01547

1. GABONESE PRESIDENT BONGO IS CURRENTLY IN THE FRG ON AN OFFICIAL VISIT (JANUARY 23-27). IN ADDITION TO CALLS ON CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT, PRESIDENT SCHEEL, FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER AND OTHERS, HIS SCHEDULE INCLUDED A ONE-DAY VISIT TO BERLIN AT THE INVITATION OF GOVERNING MAYOR STOBBE. A SPECIAL PANAM FLIGHT WAS ARRANGED TO TAKE HIM, HIS WIFE AND THE GABONESE PARTY, ACCOMPANIED BY FOREIGN OFFICE PROTOCOL CHIEF SCHOELLER, TO BERLIN ON THE AFTER-NOON OF JANUARY 26.

2. ON JANUARY 25, THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTRY CALLED IN THE GABONESE AMBASSADOR IN MOSCOW TO LODGE A FORMAL PROTEST OVER BONGO'S INTENDED VISIT TO BERLIN. BONGO'S PRESENCE IN BERLIN, THE GABONESE AMBASSADOR WAS TOLD, WOULD NOT BE IN THE INTEREST OF SOVIET/GABONESE RELATIONS
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OR IN ACCORD WITH INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS. A SIMILAR PROTEST WAS MADE BY THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN LIBREVILLE.

3. BONGO RECEIVED AN IMMEDIATE REPORT FROM HIS AMBASSADOR IN MOSCOW SHORTLY BEFORE HE WAS TO GIVE A DINNER SPEECH AND USED THAT OCCASION TO ANSWER THE SOVIET

CHARGES. HE TOLD THE AUDIENCE THAT HE WAS SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT HIS INVITATION TO VISIT BERLIN HAD BEEN CHALLENGED BY ONE GREAT POWER, WHICH APPARENTLY BELIEVED IT HAD THE RIGHT TO PROTEST THE FACT THAT HE HAD NOT CLEARED HIS TRAVEL IN ADVANCE WITH THEM. HIS REACTION TO THIS, HE SAID, WAS SUMMARIZED BY THE OLD ADAGE, "DOGS BARK, BUT THE CARAVAN GOES ON." BONGO LEFT AS SCHEDULED ON JANUARY 26 FOR BERLIN.

4. PRIVATELY, BONGO HAS BEEN TOLD THAT HIS GERMAN HOSTS WERE GRATIFIED AT HIS RESPONSE TO THE SOVIET INTERFERENCE. THEY REITERATED THAT HE HAD EVERY RIGHT TO VISIT BERLIN AND TO VIEW THE SITUATION THERE FOR HIMSELF.

5. THE AFRICAN DESK OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE IS ATTEMPTING TO GET A COPY OF THE SOVIET PROTEST FROM THE BONGO PARTY FOR STUDY BY THE FRG AND, POSSIBLY, THE BONN GROUP. STOESEL

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Message Attributes

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